from the life of court and of commoners are often so full of action and so obviously have caught the spirit of the original that the Westerner to whom the civilization depicted is exotic finds in them the appeal which, when it is well portrayed, human character in its varying moods always makes.

CALLIGRAPHY

As we have seen, the Chinese have thought of calligraphy and painting as closely allied. The two have been regarded as branches of the same art. Expertness in the use of the brush pen is basic to both. It has been maintained, indeed, that it can be better seen in calligraphy than in painting, for in the former it is not modified or obscured by the necessity of portraying objects. Calligraphy has been highly honored, perhaps as much as or more so than any other branch of art.

Examples of calligraphy are more widespread than paintings. In the old system of education specimens of the work of noted calligraphers were reproduced in the form of copy books. Inscriptions were and are to be found almost everywhere—in tablets over city gates, in temples, in government offices and palaces, as shop signs, on the honorary arches or *p'ai lou,* on votive or memorial tablets, on the supporting pillars of a building, and in homes. Scrolls—to be hung in pairs and bearing inscriptions which match each other—are almost universal. They are customary forms of gifts and may be purchased, or, if he is a skilled calligrapher, written by the donor himself. The famous or the powerful may honor their friends by presenting them with scrolls or tablets written by their own hand.

There have been many noted calligraphers. Probably as distinguished as any was Wang Hsi-chih (A.D. 321-379). Much

attention was paid by T'ang scholars and artists to calligraphy, but the dynasty did not produce as many outstanding masters of the art as did some others, notably the Sung. Probably the ranking Sung experts were Su Shih (1036-1101) and the eccentric painter Mi Fez (1051-1107). To mention even the most noted of the various dynasties, however, would prove tedious.

The best examples of the calligrapher's work have been treasured as carefully as have been great paintings. Like paintings, too, they have been copied again and again. Moreover, they have